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ABSTRACT

A study examined how government administrators in New Zealand construct their professional identities and power relationships, and how this identity is reflected in patterns of discourse and strategies of interaction. Three levels of discourse analysis (speech functions; discourse strategies; and linguistic forms) and their components and interrelationships are distinguished. Data for analysis are drawn from 322 everyday work-related interactions involving 251 individuals (152 women, 99 men) of European, Maori, and other ethnic groups in four government departments. Analysis focused on ways in which language use expresses power or relative status in the workplace. Findings are summarized in two analyses: the range of strategies that superiors use to "do power," and verbal interactions illustrating the effect of workplace power distribution. Excerpts of interactions are included. It is concluded that generalizations about relationships must be treated with caution, and that the discourse that characterizes any interaction reflects not only the particular relationship involved but also the particular goals of the interaction. In addition, in a single interaction, participants may orient to a number of different identities and goals, either simultaneously or at different points in time. Contains 12 references. (MSE)

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ED 414 733

ANALYSING POWER AT WORK: AN ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK[1]

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Example

I recently took on a new administrative role within the institution in which I work. As I began to attend meetings, receive phone calls, chair discussions and implement policy in relation to my new role, I became aware once again of the extent to which in one's everyday activities one constructs a particular type of identity. I was suddenly "doing" a new type of professional identity. I was also very aware of the extent to which others contributed to this new construct, colluding in the construction of me as "Assistant Vice Chancellor", rather than simply as the Chair of a specific department. So the ways I interacted with others, and the ways they talked to me, changed in subtle but fascinating ways. "Doing" my new professional administrative identity meant developing different patterns of discourse and strategies of interaction which reflected my (temporary) greater authority and influence in the institution.

Exploring how New Zealand government administrators construct their professional identities is one of the main concerns of this paper. But this process should be seen as just one aspect of what is going on in any interaction. People simultaneously enact a number of different aspects of their identity in their ongoing talk. In the workplace, people enact their gender identity, their ethnicity, their professional status, and so on, as they talk to others throughout the working day. A female Pakeha manager may "do power", as one way of enacting her professsional identity in an interaction with a male Pakeha policy analyst, but she will also be "doing" being a woman in the workplace, and a Pakeha in New Zealand society at the same time. Different aspects of these various identities may be more or less relevant at any particular point in the interaction, and they may be signalled by "shifts in talk" (Sarangi and Slembrouk 1996: 61). In this paper I focus on aspects of professional identity, but in doing so I am aware that other aspects of identity are simultaneously being enacted and could equally be the focus of study.

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Analysing discourse: speech acts, strategies and linguistic forms

In examining the ways in which participants use language in the workplace, I have found it useful to explore the relationship between three different levels of analysis (see Holmes 1983, Holmes, Stubbe and Vine forthcoming): speech functions (or groups of speech acts), discourse strategies, and linguistic forms. So, for example, the speech act "apology" may be expressed using a strategy of "expressing regret" and realised by the linguistic form *sorry*. Or an apology might be expressed by a strategy of "providing an excuse" and realised through the linguistic form *missed the bus again* (see Holmes 1990). The speech act "agree" may be realised by the pragmatic strategy "positive feedback", and one or more of the linguistic forms *mm, right, yes* etc. Moreover, a speech act may be realised by two or more concurrent strategies: so "concluding a meeting" may be expressed by the discourse strategy of disruptively interrupting and stating the time; the speech act "challenge" may be realised at the pragmatic strategy level by a disruptive interruption in the form of an utterance contradicting and overlapping with the expression of the proposition in the previous utterance. While the three levels may not always be clearly distinguishable, they are justified by their usefulness in separating form and function in areas such as the analyis of interruptions, amount of talk, and verbal feedback.

Table 1 provides examples of the components which might be identified at each level.

INSERT TABLE 1

Clearly, any particular speech act will tend to be expressable through a finite number of discourse strategies, and each strategy will be realisable by a finite (though often extremely large) variety of linguistic forms. However, the table does not attempt to make such links (exploration of the restrictions on the relationships between components at the different levels is an interesting project but one which is far beyond the scope of this paper).

At the level of speech acts, professional identity construction is realised by preferred patterns in the enacting of particular professional roles. Stubbs (1983: 159) discusses the close connection between social roles and particular speech acts. And, more recently, Sarangi and Slembrouck in their analysis of the language of institutional bureaucracy, point out that "the speech acts which [clients and

Table 1

LEVELS OF ANALYSIS: SPEECH ACTS, DISCOURSE STRATEGIES AND LINGUISTIC FORMS

Each column represents an independent list: no correlations between columns are implied

Speech act	Pragmatic/discourse strategies	Linguistic forms
Order	Epistemic devices	Pronouns
Disagree	Disruptive interruption	Tag question
Acknowledge	IFIDs	Modal verbs
Approve	Repetition	Imperatives
Agree	Paraphrase	Modal adverbs
Make Decisions	Metalinguistic devices	Pragmatic particles
Set agenda	Reported speech	*So...so....so....*
Seek/provide advice	Humour	Swear words
Seek/provide feedback	Amount of talk	Declaratives
Seek/provide info	Structure the discourse	Interrogatives
Apologise	Swearing	*yes, mm, right*
Complain	Pauses	etc
Sympathise	Statement	
Challenge	Question	
Organise	Positive feedback	
Conclude	etc	
Sum up		
etc		

institutional representatives] perform - for example complaining, acknowledging - are at the core of changing social relationships (1996: 71). So, to give an obvious example, in the one-to-one meetings on which we focussed, those in positions of authority tended to give more orders or instructions and more advice than their subordinates. Conversely, those in subordinate roles expressed understanding and agreement more often. Following this through to the level of discourse strategies, superiors more often expressed orders or instructions directly, going "on record", than did their subordinates. Another area which we are exploring is the relative explicitness of expressions of agreement. It appears that subordinates tend to use more minimal responses (eg.*m m, yes*) than their superiors, who also use explicit statements of agreement (eg *yes that's right*) and expressions of approval (eg. *good, fine*). At the third level of linguistic form, in expressing instructions and orders, superiors tend to use more imperatives than their subordinates, while subordinates favour epistemic devices such as modal verbs and adverbs in making suggestions or requesting their superiors to do something. Table 2 provides a tentative model of these trends with a couple of examples for illustrative purposes.

Table 2
Relationship between speech act, discourse strategies and linguistic forms

	SUPERIOR	SUBORDINATE
Speech act	Instruction	Request
Discourse strategy	Direct strategy	Indirect strategy
Linguistic form	Imperative	Epistemic devices
EXAMPLE	***ring Max***	***could you possibly give Max a call***
	**********	
Speech act	Agreement/Acceptance	Agreement/Acceptance
Discourse strategy	Direct explicit	Minimal positive agreement strategy
Linguistic form	NP BE Adjective	Minimal response
EXAMPLE	***yes that's fine***	***mm, yes***

Database and methodology

The database from which the examples discussed in this paper have been drawn consists of 322 interactions involving 251 people (152 women and 99 men) in four government departments. 111 of the participants are New Zealand Pakeha, 114 are Maori, and 26 are from other ethnic groups, such as Samoan, Chinese, or Thai.[2] Table 1 provides a breakdown of the interactions by gender and ethnicity of participants. In each workplace a group of key personnel, representing a range of roles and levels within the organisation, recorded their everyday interactions with a variety of interlocutors across a range of work settings. A number of larger meetings in each workplace were also video-taped.

The methodology developed for this project was designed to give participants maximum control over the data collection process. A group of volunteers from each workplace tape-recorded a range of their everyday work interactions over a period of about a week. Some kept a recorder and microphone on their desks, others carried the equipment round with them. All those involved provided information on their ethnic background, home language, age etc, contextual information, and permission for the data to be used for linguistic analysis. Throughout the process participants were free to edit and delete material as they wished. Even after they had completed recording and handed over the tapes, they could ask us to edit out material which they felt in retrospect they did not wish us to analyse. By handing over control of the recording process in this way, we developed an excellent research relationship with our workplace participants, based on mutual trust. Over a period of time, people increasingly ignored the recording equipment, and there are often comments at the end of interactions indicating people had forgotten about the tape recorder.[3] Also over time the amount of material they edited, or which they asked us to edit, decreased dramatically. As a result, in return for guarantees of anonymity and confidentiality, our volunteers trusted us with a wide range of fascinating material.

ANALYSIS

There are many ways in which people construct their professional identity in the workplace. One obvious means is by using language in ways which directly express a person's power or status relative to others. So managers may "manage" an interaction quite explicitly, setting the agenda, giving direct orders, expressing approval, summarising decisions, and closing the meeting. Subordinates, on the other hand, "do" their professional identity differently: for example, in interaction with a manager, an administrative assistant's discourse

will typically consist of expressions of agreement and acceptance, with occasional examples where s/he seeks clarification, or advice, or, perhaps, makes suggestions or requests. The precise ways in which interactions progress, and the degree of explicitness of face threatening speech acts such as instructions, complaints and criticisms, will obviously reflect other variables than relative status. These variables include the size of the power difference, the closeness of the relationship, and the complexity of the tasks required or material being discussed, as predicted by Politeness Theory. Other relevant contextual variables that emerged in our analysis were the topic (eg. ±social, ±sensitive, ±routine), the setting (eg. office (whose?), corridor; tea room), the function of the interaction (eg. social lunch, pre-arranged informal/formal meeting to decide issues, business talk). Our data provided illustrations of a range of patterns in the policy units we studied.

In this paper I will give just two different examples from one-to-one meetings between workplace colleagues.

(i) Selection from the range of strategies that superiors use to "do power"

(ii) Specific excerpt illustrating effect of workplace power distribution in practice

Different speech acts and "doing power" in the workplace

Do power "on record"

On occasion, professionals make their power in relation to others in the workplace quite explicit, doing power "on record". Typical examples involve explicit assertions of authority, realised by very direct strategies, including statements such as *I intend to deal with this problem immmediately* . Often these take the form of what might be labelled "meta-discoursal" comments - comments about the way they organise their discourse with others. The following examples were produced by section managers and addressed either to a policy analyst or to another manager.

Examples [4]

- I always have the over riding final say
  um but I'll never override my policy manager
  unless I thought it absolutely necessary
  and that would be quite rare
- I'm saying to them now I want you to write the briefings

but it'll be for my signature
- well I've got some teamwork issues that I have to address
  um with my policy managers
- I'm gonna address some of these issues tomorrow ...
- I'm just monitoring those....."

Set agenda

Managers often make clear at the beginning of the meeting what they expect to cover and in what order. This is one strategy for asserting control of the meeting or "doing power".

Examples

- what I'd like to do is....
- I've got a couple of things.....
- I just wanted to finish off where we got to yesterday
- [summarises background] ..and that's what this meeting is about

Express approval

Managers are responsible for getting things done by managing people: this involves (among other things) setting agreed objectives for the work of subordinates, and evaluating their performance. One frequent speech act used by managers to subordinates was "expressing approval". This was often quite explicit and overt.

Examples

- that's a good idea
- that sounds good
- that's fine
- it's very good it's very clear .....it's come out really well

Such explicit realisations of approval also occurred in interactions between managers, but were not frequent from subordinates to superiors. Subordinates tended to use the same forms as an indication of agreement rather than approval of the addressee's performance. And subordinates more often sought approval explicitly (eg *does that sound all right?*)

Challenge

Challenging statements used by managers to test a subordinate's claims are very clearly strategies which emphasise the power relationship between the participants. Once again they do power up front and directly. Each of the following examples directly challenges a statement made by a previous speaker.

Examples

- no that's not how the discussion went
- well I'm n- I don't see it that way
- but seriously what documents are we going to be producing here
- they're not going to do that
- but I'm really talking about... I mean is that material?

Summarise progress

The superior in a meeting generally took responsibility for the management of the meeting, keeping it on track, bringing it to a close and so on. One of the strategies used to manage the meeting was to summarise progress, including making decisions explicit, at regular points throughout the meeting.

Examples

- OK so where are we at in terms of I mean you're inclined to want to pull back a bit ..... and secondly .....those are the two main things eh....
- so we've sort of talked around the bit in the middle...shall we talk about..
- I think the two separate issues really are ...

Instructions/directives

Managers generally issued many instructions, some in less direct and some in more explicit form. Directives are discussed in greater detail below. Here I provide just a few examples from managers to subordinates.

Examples

- so what we need to say is....
- so can you check that out
- can someone get onto them and organise a meeting immediately if not sooner
- follow that up

In the interactions examined, the form of speech acts such as these generally reflects such factors as the relative power of the two particpants, how long they have worked together, and the nature of the task: eg how "routine" it is, or how complicated, and so on. In other words politeness theory accounts satisfactorily for many aspects of this workplace interaction.[5]

Discourse strategies and "doing power"

At the level of discourse strategies, we also find evidence that superiors in workplace interaction use specific strategies to construct their professional identities as people of power and influence. Superiors in an interaction are more likely than subordinates to dominate the floor, for example, and they may select certain strategies to achieve such dominance. Once again, it is worth noting the danger of confusing form and function. Simplistic notions about "interruptive forms" as dominance strategies, for example, have been challenged by research which has demonstrated the functional complexity of such forms (eg Stubbe 1991, James and Clark 1993). And, equally, correlations between the amount a person talks and their status or power are by no means straight forward (James and Drakich 1993, Holmes 1995). Our data provides ample support for such observations. Moreover, contextual factors, including the function of the interaction, are crucial to interpreting patterns in the distribution of talk.

Emphatic strategies

In constructing their professional identity as managers, people often used emphatic rhetorical devices which served at least in part to underline the relative power relationships in the interaction. These are further examples of "doing power" relatively explicitly. Often these devices included overt meta-communicative phrases such as *are you saying* or *I'm telling you.* (cf Stubbs 1983: 48ff). Such phrases included IFIDS (Searle 1976) such as *I advise you to...,* and *I warn you that.....*

Examples

- are you saying it's perfectly straightforward
- that's exactly the point I'm making
- I'm just reinforcing the point you just made
- I'll tell you another reason
- I've given you my reasons
- I'm talking about....
- I would advise you to take that approach a direct approach
- I think that what you ought to do M and this is just a little piece of advice to you directly ....

While superiors do not always "do power" so explicitly, it is notable that it is unmarked for them to do so. Unless they have known their superiors for a considerable period of time, and get on well with them, subordinates in many of

our one-to-one meetings tend to use language which is much less direct, characterised by a range of epistemic devices (eg *and perhaps one of the ways of thinking about it as a document is.....*)

How professionals "do power" in the workplace: more detailed analysis

This section explores further the complexity of the ways in which people construct their professional identities, illustrating in more detail how they "do power" in the policy units we researched. Two particular interactions are analysed in detail in order to indicate the range of ways in which professionals signal and negotiate their working relationships with others.

EXCERPT 1: SEEKING PERMISSION FOR LEAVE WITH PAY

The first excerpt is an interaction between Ruth, a Policy Unit manager, and Kerry, an administrative assistant from a different section. Because the person Kerry normally reports to is away, she is seeking approval for leave with pay to attend a conference from Ruth. Given that Kerry is about to leave the department, her case for leave with pay is arguable. This interaction is most illuminatingly analysed within a repressive discourse framework.

Kerry initially presents herself as a supplicant. With a variety of linguistic devices, she lowers herself symbolically in relation to Ruth. Firstly, she professes ignorance

- I don't know what the procedure is for that sort of thing

Then she suggests that she does not want to impose on the department

- I'll be sort of finishing and starting somewhere else so I didn't want to ask

Most notably, she uses a variety of negative politeness strategies, including linguistic hedges and epistemic devices, such as *well, sort of, like, probably,* and modal verbs, to attenuate the force of her speech acts. This is especially apparent in the following very roundabout response to Ruth's direct question. (Hedging devices are in bold italics.)

Example

R: when do you finish here

K: ***well I'm not sure-*** [voc] ***well*** my contract goes till April but DEPT X rung me today and they're trying to negotiate ***sort of*** me to go over there and

Jamie to come over here and *just* do a swap while we change over to train each other

R: yeah

K: so it'*d probably* happen in the next couple of weeks 'cause they're coming Jamie's coming the week after next + so um Reti said they want me to come over next week for a day while- while Jamie's still there sho- t- 'cause she said we're not sure what she does so [laughs] we- she has to show you

R: m m

K: and then + she said and then because she said they were trying to set it up with my manager themselves and then I'*d* (stay) over here to do- train Jamie ***type thing*** in what I do so + yeah and *(I) imagine* it'*d* be (in the) week after that so two

R: okay so you you haven't got that much longer here

K: no

Kelly manages to construct an aura of imprecision and vagueness around the activities in which she is involved. This is emphasised not only by the attenuating devices, but also by the amount of repetition, the number of unfinished phrases and changes of grammatical direction. She presents herself as someone in a not-very-important job who is being pushed around to some extent, but who is nevetheless cooperating with a raft of unclear and complicated job demands.

By contrast in this interaction, Ruth "does power", constructs herself as a superior, by adopting a very different style from Kerry's. She speaks very little in contrast to Kerry, and she uses direct questions and makes short simple and precise statements. It appears that she differentiates herself as far as possible from Kerry's style of interaction while attempting to force Kerry to be direct and succinct. So she repeatedly phrases her questions in a form that requires only a succinct *yes* or *no* answer. The fact that she succeeds in eliciting a simple *n o* from Kerry on occasion, as above, reflects Kerry's inability to resist responding ultimately to the pressures of the power difference between them.

However, as the interaction continues, Kerry is not so easily repressed. She responds by resisting being put down and by providing rather voluble responses,

full of apparently irrelevant detail, but designed to construct her as a cooperative young professional assistant, making a reasonable request. Her response is again characterised by a great deal of hedging or attenuating devices. (Hedging devices are in bold italics.)

Example

R: you need to confirm today do you

K: well Reti's ***sort of*** um + doing ***some*** negotiations with ***some*** people this afternoon about our ( ) and um she's going to 'cause the money's there and it's ***just***

R: yeah oh

K: that I'd I said to them not to worry about it

R: that's good

K: 'cause it + ***you know*** I was changing over and it was gonna be ***quite*** difficult time off ***and da da da da things like this*** but she said oh no you should go if you can get it

R: m m

K: so she said ***just*** ask and see what they say and I said because if the- if I'm not gonna get paid while I'm doing it then I'm not gonna go and she said okay that's fine but ***just*** ask anyway [laughs]

R: yeah true

K: so that's what I'm doing yeah

R: okay so you need to know today

In this excerpt, instead of simply answering "yes" to Ruth's direct question, Kerry recounts a dialogue whose main import is to construct her as a rather innocent, biddable young employee following advice from a superior. Kerry attributes to Reti the suggestion that she has nothing to lose by asking for funding to attend the conference. She presents herself as someone who has worked out her position but is prepared to follow sensible advice from others.

As a subordinate, dealing with a superior with whom she is not familiar, and making a request which represents a considerable imposition, Brown and Levinson's Politeness theory predicts that Kerry's request will be expressed with a great deal of redressive action and negative politeness. Indeed, Kerry begins by avoiding mention of the fact that the request represents an imposition on the organisation, using, in other words, a very indirect, off-record avoidance strategy. It is clear from the analysis above that much of Kerry's subsequent

behaviour also conforms to Brown and Levinson's predictions: she uses a great many indirect strategies and negative politeness devices. However, her refusal to be squashed and to conform to Ruth's pressure to reply directly and monosyllabically is better accounted for as the discourse of resistance, than as cooperative discourse. Ruth on the other hand, as the powerful participant uses very direct strategies which can be clearly classsified as instances of repressive discourse. It is interesting to note, however, that the effect of social distance and the ranking of the imposition are evident in her contributions towards the end of the interaction. If she had known Kerry well, and she had been one of her own staff, Ruth might have been expected to communicate a negative decision directly and immediately. As it is, she indicates that she is not inclined to consider that Kerry has a strong case, but she hedges to the extent of asking for time to consider the application further:

- can you let me think about it
- okay let me have a think about it
  and I'll get back to you

These brief excerpts illustrate the dynamic nature of such interactions. The two participants are constantly repositioning themselves and in the process they construct appropriate professional identities in relation to the issue being addressed. Their presentations of self are constantly being adjusted in relation to the ongoing discourse.

The next excerpt again illustrates the dynamic nature of workplace negotiation through discourse, with a subordinate seeking support from a superior for her position in a debate. The issue is a complex and potentially very face threatening one (to the subordinate's face).

EXCERPT 2: SEEKING SUPPORT FOR A PROPOSAL

Like the previous excerpt, excerpt 2 involves an interaction between two people at different levels in the organisational hierarchy, a policy analyst, Kelly, and a senior policy analyst, Katie. Kelly is seeking Katie's advice about possible titles for a publication. She begins by reporting her negative opinion of the title that has been proposed at a meeting which she missed. This disclosure is potentially a great threat to Kelly's face, since she does not know Katie's position on the issue and she does not know Katie well enough to be able to be able to tackle the problem directly. The problem is a large enough one to require careful handling. Hence, she devotes the first minute of their meeting to expressing her own

views very tentatively, as behoves someone in her position, while attempting to suss out Katie's views as she proceeds. (Hedging devices are in bold italics.)

Example

KM: okay it's about the title for the gender analysis publication

KT: oh yeah

KM and there was a meeting to discuss the titles when I was away

KT: yeah

KM: ***I mean you know*** i was supposed to be there but it's ***just*** that I've got ***a little bit of a concern*** about this is the ***sort of thing*** that um [tut] is being opted for like the gender aGENda but ***I sort of think*** that um

KT: that's been used

KM: well also you see ***I suppose*** my concept of what we want to convey is not ***something that sound*** we- we ***sort of*** don't want to sound like it's an agenda we're trying to push because we're feminists right ***I think*** what we what it needs to convey is ***um something that's more about um*** how you how + you ***actually*** build in the differences be- ***you know*** that gender bring about to get good quality advice ***do- do you sort of know what I mean like*** it's cause o- ***I'm trying to think*** who we're targetting ***I just think*** the word agenda goes puts them right off

KT: yeah

KM: and I was trying to think of a

KT: it's a very political word

KM: well that's right ***I mean*** and it I ***just*** wonder if if our market

KT: yeah

KM: is ***actually*** policy managers and policy analysts we should ***actually*** go for something different ***do you think*** is that your ***sort of*** gut feeling about that

KT: yes I do
actually I think these are all awful.....
none of them are useable.....
they are either wimpy or silly or politically misdirected

The excerpt illustrates the linguistic effects of a face threatening situation for Kelly. Kelly has less status than Katie, and less power and general influence in the organisation for which they both work. The disclosure of her views, which differ from those expressed by a number of others, is a risky one. On all the relevant measures, then (power differential, some social distance and a risky

proposition) politeness theory predicts the situation is one which is highly face threatening for Kelly, and her language clearly reflects this.

This is an excellent example of the ways in which professionals at different status levels negotiate their relative views. Kelly's propositions are heavily hedged and attentuated (as indicated in bold italics). They leave her room to escape if she finds that Katie does not agree. Katie's statements, by contrast, are expressed succinctly and directly and are largely unattenuated.

that's been used
it's a very political word
I think these are all awful
none of them are useable.....
they are either wimpy or silly or politically misdirected

As in the previous excerpt the superior in this situation is being appealed to as a source of authority. And again, as in excerpt 2, she uses relatively few words in responding and they are direct and to the point.

From this point on, however, this interaction develops differently. Once they have established that they agree in their assessment of the proposed title, contributions to the interaction become notably more "equal" or similar, both in terms of the relative amount of talk each contributes, and in terms of the kind of language each uses. Kelly relaxes and her language becomes notably less tentative and less negatively polite. Katie begins to actively contribute ideas about possible titles. This has the effect that the pragmatic particles and hedges which occur from this point are more often approximators related to the content of the propositions than addressee-oriented hedges concerned with face redress (cf Holmes 1984). They reflect the fact that the two women are brain-storming, exploring ideas, thinking aloud and searching for the best form of words, rather than concerned to attenuate the force of propositions for affective reasons.

This change of focus from talk which reflects concern with their professional relationship, and particularly with the implications of their relative status and influence, to talk which is task-focussed also has a considerable effect on features of the discourse organisation. Their shared absorption with the topic is reflected not only in the similar features of their linguistic realisations of speech acts such as suggestions and expressions of opinion, but also by such features as the development of a "shared floor" (Edelsky 1981), and a more equal distribution of the talk as these two professional policy analysts brainstorm the problem.

Example

[The sections between slashes represent overlapping speech]

Katie: um what about something like of working towards ++ um (6) oh yes i like the double vision idea

Kelly: m m

Katie: u m

Kelly: I mean that's sort of + like well 'cause it is it's sort of like trying to see two perspectives isn't it [clears throat]

Katie: yes yes

Kelly: instead/of just one\

Katie: /yes only it's not double vision it's like it's like\ two

Kelly: /I know\ it's

Katie: /it's like 2D vision [laughs] isn't it\

Kelly: /oh yeah or three dimensional vision\

Katie: /yes\

Kelly: 'cause you actually want to /think\ about

Katie: /yes\

Kelly: um [tut] + you know all the other/characteristics\ of ethnicity and age

Katie: /yeah\

Kelly: age it's sort of like having a /rounded\

Katie: /yes\

Kelly: picture full picture sort of /thing\ isn't it

Katie: /yeah\

This section contrasts in very obvious ways with the preceding example from the same interaction. Here the two women both address the same problem. The amount of speech contributed by each is much more equal. There is a great deal of overlapping speech, reflecting their high energy level and involvement in the task. And there is a great deal of overt agreement with agreeing speech acts explicitly expressed with forms such as *I know, yes yes*, and *oh yeah,* articulated with an enthusiasm reflected in their relatively high volume and high pitch.

This interaction illustrates again the constant negotiation of relative statuses which characterise workplace interaction. Throughout the central section of the interaction the two participants make pretty equal contributions, endorse, expand, and elaborate each others' suggestions. They work together and their power difference appears to be largely irrelevant during these sections. Their

relative professional roles come into focus again only towards the end of the interaction when Katie, the senior person, takes the initiative in moving towards a closing

Katie: well if I think of anything further ....

and Kelly acknowledges her assistance

Kelly: okay yes that was very helpful thank you Katie that's GREAT

In concluding, Kelly refers back to the opening of the interaction and her relief that Katie and she assess the suggested title similarly. Katie reiterates her view and reassures Kelly.

Kelly: and I'm glad your um reaction to um that is the same as mine
Katie: oh I think they're terrible
Kelly: I just think it's NOT the right the a- not the right approach yeah

In this closing section, then, they revert to their earlier pattern reflecting their relative professional status relationship, with Katie being succint and direct, while Kelly's contributions are fuller and more elaborated.

Conclusion

The analysis has explored a number of ways in which superiors "do power" in interaction. The observations are grounded in a detailed analysis of a set of naturally occurring interactional sequences which were collected in an organisational setting along with a wealth of ethnographic information. Having access to this additional contextual material has greatly enriched the analysis. On this basis we can confidently say that superiors in a professional workplace "do power" in interaction in a variety of ways, including both explicit "on-record" strategies as well as a range of more consensual devices. Similarly, subordinates signal their relationship with those who have greater authority and influence by their discourse choices. So, for example, the choice of strategies and linguistic forms to express a range of speech acts such as giving instructions, seeking information, providing approval and agreeing, express and reflect the relationship between policy analysts in their workplace interactions. Similarly, the distribution of talk, the organisation of turns, and the kinds of "floor" which develop in an interaction, are aspects of the process of constructing professional identities in which policy analysts engage.

The analyses above make it clear that generalisations must be treated with caution. The discourse which characterises any interaction will reflect not only the particular relationship involved, in terms of social distance or solidarity, and

relative power or potential influence in the organisation, it will also reflect the particular goals of the interaction, and the relative roles of each participant in relation to those goals. Moreover, features of the discourse will reflect the dynamic and responsive nature of interaction. In the course of a single interaction, participants may orient to a number of different identities and goals, either simultaneously or at different points in time. There are thus many other areas which our preliminary analyses suggest may be fruitful sites for further exploration. The analytical framework sketched in this paper offers the potential for identifying interesting contrasts in the ways in which people "do power" in different organisations, perhaps reflecting ethnicity and gender differences which affect the ways in which distinctive work cultures develop in particular environments.

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NOTES

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[2] Pakeha is a Maori word used in New Zealand to refer to people of European (usually British) descent.

[3] Mott and Petrie (1995: 329) who adopted a similar methodology make the same point.

[4] All names have been changed to protect identities. We have done minor editing for ease of reading in places: eg overlapping speech is not indicated where it is not relevant to the point being made.

[5] Our analysis has also identified cases where a repressive discourse approach provides a more illuminating analysis: eg 1where the surface forms express positive or negative politeness, but the underlying message is a manipulative one, intent on getting the addressee to conform or agree to do something which they do not want to do. We explore such cases in Holmes, Stubbe and Vine (forthcoming).